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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The foregoing amendments and the following remarks are responsive to the June 30, 2006 Office Action for the above-identified patent application. Claims 1-6 were originally in this application. Claims 1-6 were amended and new Claim 7 was added in the *Preliminary Amendment* filed on May 17, 2004. Claims 1-5 and 7 are amended herein. Claims 6 remains as previously presented. Accordingly, Claims 1-7 are presented herein for consideration by the Examiner.

Response to objection to the specification

In the June 30, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner objects to the disclosure because of a perceived informality. In particular, the Examiner states that "line 33 of page 2 contains an incomplete word (i.e. 'situ')."

Applicant respectfully traverses this objection. The sentence containing the perceived "incomplete word" begins on line 31 of page 2. The sentence contains the open compound word "in situ" which has a space between the two parts of the word. The first part of "in situ" appears at the end of line 32 and the second part of "in situ" appears at the beginning of line 33. Since the word "in situ" is correct, no correction is required.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the specification.

Response to objection to the drawings

In the June 30, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner objects to the drawings because the reference character "707" is not mentioned in the specification. The Examiner requires correction of the drawings or amendment of the specification in response to the objection.

Applicant has amended the specification in response to the objection. In particular, Applicant has rewritten the paragraph beginning on page 16 and line 26 and

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continuing to page 17 at line 10 to include the reference character 707 in the description of Figure 6.

Since Applicant has amended the specification to mention the reference character, no drawing corrections are required.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the drawings.

Response to claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the June 30, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner objects to Claims 2, 3, 5 and 7 as lacking an antecedent basis in Claim 1 for the limitation "the identification data." The Examiner objects to Claim 7 as lacking antecedent basis in Claim 1 for "sorting code." Applicant has amended Claims 2, 3, 5 and 7 herein in response to the Examiner's objections.

Claim 7

Applicant submits that dependent Claim 7 properly introduces "identification data" as a new limitation because Claim 7 does not include the article "the" before "identification data." Accordingly, no antecedent is required in Claim 1 for the use of "identification data" in Claim 7. Applicants have amended the structure of Claim 7 to emphasize that "identification data" is being introduced in Claim 7.

Applicant has amended Claim 7 herein to properly introduce "sorting code" as a part of the identification data.

Applicant respectfully submits that amended Claim 7 now complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 2, 3 and 5

Dependent Claims 2, 3 and 5 originally depended from independent Claim 1. Applicant has amended Claims 2, 3 and 5 herein to depend from dependent Claim 7. As discussed above, amended Claim 7 properly introduces the identification data.

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Accordingly, amended Claim 7 provides the antecedent basis for "the identification data" in amended Claims 2, 3 and 5.

Applicant respectfully submits that amended Claims 2, 3 and 5 now comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 2, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Discussion of other amendments to claims

Applicant has amended Claims 1, 4 and 5 to delete the unnecessary hyphens before each claim element in the body of each claim. The deletions of the hyphens do not affect the meaning or scope of the amended claims.

Response to rejection of Claims 1, 2 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 2 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,682,429 to Cordery et al. ("Cordery"). Applicant notes that Claim 3 is not mentioned in the first paragraph of the rejection; however, the Examiner presents a rejection to Claim 3 on page 5 of the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant traverses the stated rejection to Claim 3 along with the rejections of Claims 1, 2 and 5-7 in the following arguments.

Cordery does not disclose or suggest Applicant's Invention

Cordery discloses a method for preparing address information for mail pieces that are going to be sent from a mailing facility to enter a national postal system such as the US Postal Service. Cordery discloses a complex system for verifying addresses and for determining postage for the mail pieces. Cordery does not disclose or suggest a method for sequencing mail pieces from a delivery facility to be delivered by a mail courier (e.g., a US Postal Service letter carrier) or delivery agent to the intended mail recipients. Once the Cordery system has placed the addresses on the mail pieces and the mail pieces have entered the postal system, the Cordery system does not provide any control over the delivery of the mail pieces to the intended recipients.

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In contrast to the Cordery system, which is concerned with accuracy of the addresses and postage on mail pieces entering the postal system, the present application is directed to the efficient and accurate delivery of mail pieces that are exiting the postal system. In particular, the present invention addresses problems that may occur with respect to many of the thousands of mail pieces that arrive at a local postal service facility each day. In order to transport the mail pieces from the postal service facility to businesses and residences serviced by the facility, the mail pieces need to be sorted so that the mail pieces are routed to the correct mail carrier. The mail pieces also need to be sorted so that the mail carrier is able to deliver the mail pieces efficiently. In particular, the mail pieces need be placed in a sequence that allows the mail carrier to deliver the mail pieces in an order that minimizes the distance traveled and the time required to complete the deliveries. The sorting and sequencing may be affected by local factors such as changes of address, special delivery requirements (e.g., deliver to certain addresses only on certain days), changes in delivery routes, or the like. The claims of the present application define a method for generating a correct distribution sequence that is responsive to the local factors.

Claim 1

Claim 1 defines a method of generating a correct distribution sequence for use in the last stage of sorting the mail pieces in a mail system to provide an efficient and accurate delivery of the mail pieces to the designated recipient. Claim 1 further defines the transfer of the mail address sequence from a central address database to a local system in a mail sorting center and the correction of the mail delivery sequence based on local changes stored in an audit file. Unlike the Cordery system which changes the actual addresses on a mail piece before the mail piece enters the postal system, the corrections provided by the method defined in Claim 1 are used locally to sort addressed mail pieces into the correct sequence for accurate and efficient delivery of the mail pieces to the intended recipients.

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In particular, Claim 1 defines a method for automatically generating current distribution order data with the inclusion of central address directories. A current central address directory or parts relating to a relevant area are copied locally. Change instructions regarding a relative positional change for delivery points in the distribution order for a previous version of the central address directory or, of the parts are also copied locally. The change instructions are transferred to the local copy of the current central address directory or parts. A check is performed so as to determine whether the change instructions have already been implemented in the current address directory or whether the instructions are yet to be executed. Valid change instructions yet to be executed are stored in an audit file. The change instructions are then executed. The resulting information is thus kept up to date on a local basis so that the mail pieces are sorted accurately for delivery by the mail couriers.

Applicant respectfully submits that Cordery neither anticipates Claim 1 nor renders Claim 1 obvious. In particular, Cordery is concerned with the generation of correct addresses and correct postage and does not teach or suggest the generation of distribution order data.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 1 to allowance.

Claim 7

Amended Claim 7 depends from Claim 1 and further defines the invention defined in Claim 1 wherein the delivery points are identified according to identification data which comprises a sorting code. In view of the patentability of Claim 1, as discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 7 is also patentably distinguished over the cited art for at least this reason. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that Cordery does not teach "identifying delivery points according to identification data comprising at least a sorting code" in column 11 at lines 40-51 or at

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·any other location. Accordingly, Claim 7 is patentably distinguished over Cordery for at least this additional reason.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 7 to allowance.

Claim 2

Claim 2 is amended herein to depend from amended Claim 7, which depends from Claim 1. Claim 2 further defines the invention defined in Claims 1 and 7 wherein the identification data further incorporates house number extensions. In view of the patentability of Claims 1 and 7, as discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 2 is also patentably distinguished over the cited art for at least this reason.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 2 to allowance.

Claim 3

Claim 3 is amended herein to depend from amended Claim 7, which depends from Claim 1. Claim 3 further defines the invention defined in Claims 1 and 7 wherein the identification data further incorporates distinguishing remarks. In view of the patentability of Claims 1 and 7, as discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 3 is also patentably distinguished over the cited art for at least this reason.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 3 to allowance.

Claim 5

Claim 5 is amended herein to depend from amended Claim 7, which depends from Claim 1. Claim 5 further defines the invention defined in Claims 1 and 7 wherein the central address directory or address directory parts are updated by transmitting only incremental changes by data transfer. The changes are merged with the previously current and copied address directory or address directory part by using the identification data for each delivery point to check in the previously current address directory or

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address directory part whether the respective delivery point in the incremental change is already present. If the delivery point is not already present, the delivery point is incorporated into the copied address directory or address directory part at the concomitantly transmitted position of the distribution order. If the delivery point is already present, the respective delivery point is moved to the changed position in the address directory. As discussed above, Cordery does not teach or suggest placing delivery points in a distribution order. In view of the patentability of Claims 1 and 7, as discussed above, and in further view of these additional limitations not disclosed or suggested by Cordery, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 5 is patentably distinguished over Cordery for at least these reasons.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 5 to allowance.

Claim 6

Claim 6 depends from amended Claim 5, which depends from amended Claim 7, which depends from Claim 1. Claim 6 further defines the invention defined in Claims 1 7 and 5 wherein the move of a delivery point is implemented by deleting the delivery point at the previous position of the address directory and re-entering it at the changed position. As discussed above, Cordery does not teach or suggest placing delivery points in a distribution order, and therefore does not teach or suggest moving the delivery point from a previous position to a changed position. In view of the patentability of Claims 1, 7 and 5, as discussed above, and in further view of these additional limitations not disclosed or suggested by Cordery, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 6 is patentably distinguished over Cordery for at least these reasons.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 6 to allowance.

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Response to rejection of Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a

.The Examiner rejects Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cordery In view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0010658 A1 to Suzuki et al. ("Suzuki"). The Examiner acknowledges that Cordery does not teach the limitation of incorporating distribution advice, but states that paragraph 0054 of Suzuki teaches incorporating distribution advice as delivery instruction data for instructing the delivery of the merchandise.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claim 4. Claim 4 depends from amended Claim 3, which depends from amended Claim 7, which depends from Claim 1. Claim 3 further defines the invention defined in Claims 1, 7 and 3 as further comprising the steps of incorporating forwarding and/or distribution advice into the copied address directory. As set forth above, Claim 1 and dependent Claims 7 and 3 are patentably distinguished over Cordery. Suzuki does not teach or suggest the limitations missing from Cordery. Applicant respectfully submits that dependent Claim 4 is patentably distinguished over Cordery for at least the same reasons as set forth above.

As further defined in Claim 4, the method performs a check so as to determine whether the delivery point for the respective forwarding and/or distribution advice exists in the copied current address directory for the distribution order data. If such forwarding and/or distribution advice exists, the method adds new forwarding and/or distribution advice to the copied address directory, with the new forwarding and/or distribution advice having priority over the old forwarding and/or distribution advice of a same type. The method further incorporates a complete change of data for the forwarding and/or distribution advice into the audit file. As discussed above, Cordery does not disclose any aspect of the distribution of mail pieces from the local mail facility to the intended recipient. Thus, Cordery does not teach any aspect of forwarding mail or providing distribution advice regarding mail at the local mail facility.

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The Examiner's statement that Suzuki teaches "incorporating distribution advice" as instruction data for instructing the delivery of the merchandise is not relevant to the invention defined in Claim 4. The cited words from Suzuki must be considered in the context of the Suzuki disclosure. In particular, paragraph 0054 of Suzuki states:

> [0054] Then, when an order data of the desired merchandise 4 (hereinafter referred to as client order data) is transmitted from the client who saw the merchandise catalog by means of personal computer, the distribution management center 2 transmits a delivery instruction data for instructing the delivery of the merchandise 4 to the delivery company 6 via the internet 3 based on the client order data.

In the context of Suzuki, the foregoing paragraph is related to instructions for delivery of merchandise to the delivery company. The paragraph has no relation whatsoever to the delivery of mail pieces or any other materials from a local mailing facility to the intended recipient. In particular, the paragraph includes no suggestion of checking to see whether forwarding instructions or other delivery advice exists and changing the address directory to reflect the instructions or other advice. Just as Cordery, Suzuki is directed to a system which manages the entry of items into a delivery system and does not provide any disclosure regarding the distribution of items from a local mail facility to intended recipients. Accordingly, for at least this additional reason, dependent Claim 4 is patentably distinguished over the proposed combination of Cordery and Suzuki.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and to pass Claim 6 to allowance.

Summary of response

Applicant has responded to the objections and the rejections in the June 30, 2006 Office Action by amending certain claims and by presenting arguments in support of the patentability of the amended claims. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-7 presented herein for consideration are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to allow Claims 1-7 and pass this application to the issue process.

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Request for telephone interview

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to the objections and the rejections raised in the Office Action so as to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney of record at the telephone number listed below in order to resolve such issues promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:_____9/21/06_____

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